



Chief's Notes

April 2015

Tulare County Fire Department

So What's Going On?

You know the old adage that no sooner do you wash your car, then it starts to rain? Well, something similar happened to me this past Saturday. We had intended to do some exterior work at our house very early in the morning and afterwards attend the Porterville Iris Festival. Much to our surprise, we woke up early to the sound of rain. This was a welcome reminder of how fickle April weather can be. As it turned out, we went to Porterville anyway and had a great time walking in the rain, sheltered by our umbrellas. My only regret is that the rain did not continue for the entire weekend!

On April 1st, Firefighter Whitney Cordova from Station 20, and I attended the Springville Rotary Club meeting at the River Island Golf Course near Springville. The Rotary Club recognized Firefighter Cordova for being selected as the "Tulare County Firefighter of the Year" for the Porterville area.

Lt. Seguin's wife created a wonderful framed collage of TCFD staff pictures from the various units within the department. The collage was intended as a gift to be placed in Captain Pete Dern's (Fresno Fire Department) hospital room in Fresno. The collage was presented to Captain Dern's wife and was much appreciated. This is clearly an example of the brotherhood that exists amongst fire service personnel.

As per my earlier e-mail to all of you, we will be creating a "Third Battalion" effective May 17th, 2015. The third battalion will encompass most of the western part of the County creating a Freeway 99 Battalion.

We had an "All Chiefs" meeting on April 21st. This quarterly meeting allows all the Chief Officers to meet and collaborate on decisions that affect the department in a participative

effort. It was a very productive meeting and all the issues relative to the Third Battalion were flushed out and resolved.

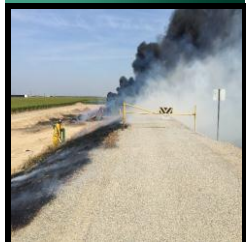
April 22nd was Administrative Professionals Day. We took our administrative staff out to lunch at Tahoe Joe's. We all had a great time and we are truly grateful for all the work they do.

On Tuesday, April 28th, our staff met with a representative from ISO to finalize their evaluation process. We have been providing him with information over a period of several weeks. The ISO's final evaluation of the department and the county communities will result in an overall rating that will affect county residents relative to their homeowner's insurance rates. The ratings are from 1 to 10, with 1 being the best rating. The lower the rating, the cheaper the insurance rates. All indications are that our ratings will improve. We have our fingers crossed.

Also, on Tuesday, April 28th, our Department Secretary, Jasmine Enfieldjian, was recognized by the Board of Supervisors for 25 years of service to Tulare County. Jasmine has worked the last 25 years with the Fire Department starting on November 27th, 1989. *Way to go Jasmine!*

I attended the Vietnam Wall dedication in Dinuba on April 30th. It was a moving ceremony and the Wall clearly reminds us of the ultimate sacrifices that were made by others so that liberty and freedom could spread to other parts of the world.

I visited Battalion #1 stations this month, and had a good time visiting with each one of you in the battalion. *Keep up the good work!*



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So What's Going On? *(Cont'd.)*

Also in the month of April, our department took the opportunity to make a difference in someone's life by volunteering at the Visalia Rescue Mission. Our objective was to support the Visalia Rescue Mission in their daily serving of meals to those, within our community, who have fallen on hard times.



These are the names who participated to make this a very successful mission:

Chief Officers:

Chief Garcia
Chief Norman
Chief Mclaughlin

Engineers:

Eng. Lopez

Firefighters:

FF Whitney Cordova
FF Gibbs
FF Miller
FF Ramos
FF Sanchez (twice)
FF M. Seguin

Explorers:

Everett Knot (Advisor)
Jordan Machado (twice)
Michaela Machado (twice)
Renee Machado (Advisor)
(twice)

Captains:

Capt. Cornett
Capt. Helo
Capt. Ortiz (twice)
Capt. Parish
Capt. Rosa
Capt. Russell & wife

Lieutenants:

LT. Doyle & wife (twice)
Lt. Ezaki
Lt. Moule
Lt. Seguin (twice)
Lt. Vincent

Supply Center:

Bob Brunelle



Emergency Services

As we complete the month of April, it has been another busy month for the Emergency Services Division. In April the fuels continued to dry, and we began to see an increase in vegetation fires and demands for service in general. This month our call volume increased by approximately 5% in comparison to March 2015, and approximately 12% in comparison to April 2014. Again, keep safety at the forefront of every action by hydrating appropriately and promoting situational awareness on all incidents.

There were several noteworthy incidents that occurred throughout the County in April. On April 6th, Battalion 2 crews responded to 195280 Road 128 in the Strathmore area for a mobile home fire with multiple exposures. Later in the shift, Battalion 2 personnel responded to Avenue 188 and Road 248 to a compound fire with multiple exposures near the SRA in the area just east of Strathmore. Both incidents required multiple unit responses, but were mitigated without injury or significant issues beyond our response capabilities.



In April, fire crews also responded to two separate fire incidents at 807 S. Mirage in the unincorporated area of Lindsay. The fires were obviously incendiary and should be noted due to the high probability of potential reoccurrences. In addition, there have been several commercial fires, as well haystack and various industrial incidents.

During this month we also began to experience numerous vegetation fires in both the LRA and SRA areas. Most of the Department has



*There is no
future in
any job.
The future
lies in the
person who
holds the job.*

*~ Dr. George
Crane*

Emergency Services *(Cont'd.)*

completed RT-130 testing to further assist us with our wildland training and preparedness. Please review updated SOG-519 relating to SRA response criteria. This update has been approved and should be enroute to your stations shortly.

During the past month, we responded to approximately 1050 calls for service. This included 21 structure fires, 26 vehicle fires, 39 vegetation fires, 100 motor vehicle accidents, and 662 medical aids. The Tulare County Fire Department also provided mutual/automatic aid to the Cities of Tulare, Visalia, Porterville and Dinuba, as well as Fresno and Kings Counties on various incidents.



Tulare County Fire staff (in conjunction with County OES) continues to assist with drought relief efforts in East Porterville as well as other areas of the County. The needs will undoubtedly increase as we enter our summer season. Earlier in the month, a sizeable bottled water donation was made to the East Porterville region by CHIVE of Kern County. Station 20 and all fire personnel continue to provide assistance with the ongoing water needs as County, State, and Federal agencies work towards long term solutions.

Tulare County Fire Suppression personnel also continue to make progress with various programs. On April 13th, the Fire Chaplain Group met at Station 11 for a training and planning session. The Chaplain Program is now ready to go and will assist in meeting needs of the Department and community. The Honor Guard also completed the LODD (Line of Duty Death) form which will serve as a guide to assist our personnel during their time of need. Lieutenant Elizaldi was instrumental in its development and the form will be distributed this month, with instructions attached.

During the mid-year budget review process, the Fire Department was approved for a third Battalion. The new Battalion quarters will be housed at Station 26 and is scheduled to go online on May 17th. The new Battalion will cover Stations 7, 25, 26, 27, 28, 9 & 10. Boundaries for Battalion 3 will be north from Hwy 137, west to the Kings County line, south to the Kern County line, and the eastern boundary will run along Roads 180 and 192 and along Highway 65 south of Ducor. The new Battalion Chiefs assigned to Battalion 3 will be Chief Kutka (A Shift) and Chief Whitendale (B Shift). The C platoon will be covered for a short term by Acting Battalion Chiefs until a new Battalion Chief is promoted.

Always keep in mind the inherent risks associated with the firefighting profession. Since January of 2015, there have been 28 firefighter fatalities in the United States. Please take every opportunity to train and stay active to maintain job currency as well as high levels of physical fitness. *Stay hydrated and healthy as we move into our busier season.*



Support Services

Training Bureau

Academy 15-02 is in full swing with all 11 recruits still going strong! Along with the Academy, two additional Extra-Help Firefighters got their HazMat FRO

certificates. *Keep up the good work!*

RT-130 testing got underway, shining light on our strengths and challenges.

Fire Prevention Bureau

The month of April has been productive for the Fire Prevention Bureau. The Fire Inspectors have continued with their inspection workload and began their newly created monthly training program. The Captains conducted a few fire investigations during the month of April and attended a Prevention class.

Prior to the start of each month, every station will receive their prescribed B and M for that month. If you are unable to complete those inspections, please notify the Fire Prevention Bureau and your Battalion Chief. Also, please remember to send in your Facilities Name Change forms into the Fire Prevention Bureau

so our files and inspection information can remain accurate.

Just a reminder - please include the appropriate contact information in your report narrative so that the Bureau can collect cost recovery on nuisance or negligent fires. This not only allows us to recoup our cost, but reduces the risk to our employees and better serves the public.

Another reminder is that Hazard Abatement has started. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Inspector Cyndi Allen at Headquarters.



Communications Center

Congratulations to Amber Trimble who was selected as "Dispatcher of the Year". This year's banquet was hosted by Selma Police Department who put on a 50's themed event. Amber was presented a plaque and recognized for her dedication to the department.

FireComm's temporary transition to Cal Fire went as smoothly as we could have hoped. FireComm operated out of Cal Fire's ECC for a week and a half as FireComm's facility underwent some upgrades. New curtains, ceiling tiles and vinyl hardwood flooring were installed, which gives the building a whole new look. New desks were installed, and IT was able to install the new monitors and new towers for the radio and computer systems. While FireComm was away, the Radio Shop took advantage of the time and installed a new firmware update to work with the new operating system. There is still some work that needs to be done to get the four PODS fully functional. If you're ever in the area, stop by and take a look at all the new changes.

During mid-month, FireComm started to receive parts for the phone upgrade. AT&T has been at FireComm starting some of the preparations needed to transfer the system. The configuration for the new phone system is coming along and looks great. The phone upgrade is going to have touch screen capabilities in an attempt to be more user friendly.

At the end of April, the CAD upgrade was implemented. With this upgrade, the CAD system has gone to a web browser and now has a windows-based platform. There have been some glitches that we are still trying to resolve. IT and ADSI CAD personnel are working together to correct, or find solutions for these glitches. The biggest glitch is that there is no history prior to 4-28-15 when the new CAD system was implemented. IT stated that hopefully, within the first week of May, they would be able to download the history, making it accessible. Another big issue is that currently reports are not dropping into ERS but we are looking into a solution. During this time, FireComm is able to email call information to stations or provide incident numbers and times over the phone per their request. Be patient with FireComm personnel as they learn to navigate the new systems.



*Live your
life so that
the child
within you
is never
ashamed
of the adult
you've
become...*



Supply Center

This month's topic will be on the proper storage of the Tulare County Fire Department's Personal Protective Equipment (PPE). It has become apparent that fire department personnel store their PPE in less than desirable locations, (i.e. the back of their pick-up trucks). Although the ability to store PPE inside a vehicle may not always be an option for some individuals, we, as a fire department, must ensure that all issued PPE is safeguarded from environmental elements as much as possible.

Some individuals have equipment bags to store their PPE in; however, those bags are not necessarily rated for Ultra Violet protection. As you can see in the pictures, this is what happens when garments are exposed to the elements.



This structural coat was stored inside a red firefighter gear bag that was not rated for UV protection. A visual inspection did not show that this garment would necessarily be deemed out-of-service, but when it was washed, it tore, because the fibers had been degraded by the sun's UV rays.

This set of structural pants was stored in the "ready" position over a pair of structural boots. Though this is a common layout for keeping PPE ready for donning, it was left exposed to UV rays by the sun. What is concerning about



these structural pants is that they were manufactured in 2013 but look like they could have been more than ten years old due to the physical damage that is obviously apparent.

We must all do our part to ensure that our investment in our protective gear that we count on to save, not only your life, but the lives of others, is kept in the most serviceable condition possible. Let's look out for each other and help educate those of us who may be less experienced with identifying less than desirable situations for PPE storage.

